

by affinity, violation is not incest. In England a man may not marry his deceased wife's sister. If he does it, his marriage is unlawful, but it is not incest. The definition of incest must include the notion of a blood connection as blood connection is understood in that group at the time. Other prohibitions may be expedient, or may seem required by propriety (e.g. the marriage of a man with his father's widow), but they do not come under incest.

Restrictions on marriage by kinship, as the people in question construed kinship, go back to the most primitive society.

Some very primitive people have intricate restrictions, and they maintain them by the severest social sanctions.

509. Incest notion produced from the folkways.

It is evident

that primitive people must have received a suggestion or impression of some important interest at stake in this matter. They

adopted taboos and established folkways to protect interests. In

time these taboos and folkways won very great force and high

religious sanction; also a sense of abomination was produced

which seemed to be a "natural" feeling. There certainly is no

natural feeling. The abomination is conventional and traditional.

The Pharaohs, Ptolemies, and Incas, the Zoroastrians, are

sufficient to show that there is no reason for the abomination in

any absolute or universal facts. The sanctions by which savage

people sustained the taboo were the strongest possible,—exile and

death. Here we have, therefore, a social limitation of the great-

est force, sanctioned by religion and group consent and growing

into an abomination which has come down to us and which we

all feel, but which is a product of the most primitive folkways;

and yet we do not know the motive for it in the

minds of primitive men. In the matter of cannibalism we saw (Chapter VIII) that with advancing civilization a taboo has been set up against a food custom which appears to have been universal amongst primitive men ; that is, we have reversed and hold in abomination what they did. In regard to incest we have accepted and fully ratified their taboo.

510. Notion that inbreeding is harmful. This taboo and the reasons for it are a complete enigma unless the primitive people